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AUTHOR Whooley, John E.
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ABSTRACT

Most criticism of teacher preparation programs has been leveled at schools, departments, and colleges of education. However, a case study at one university indicates that faculty in the School of Arts and Sciences deliver 61 percent of the credits in a typical elementary education program, and 74 percent in the secondary program. Because most of these faculty members have been prepared as researchers, logic suggests that they would be good models for researchers, not teachers. Issues of identity, preparedness, and modeling have been explored to some extent; they warrant an institutional response to criticisms of teacher preparation programs. An example of the type of institutional response called for is a program developed by the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. This program serves faculty from 34 academic disciplines and service areas and addresses the problems of preparedness and modeling. The program has been evaluated highly by participants. (AMH)

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IMPROVING TEACHING ACROSS THE HIGHER EDUCATION
CURRICULA: A RESPONSE TO THE CRITICISM OF
TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS

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John E. (Jack) Whooley, Ed.D.
Associate Dean, School of Education
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
Eau Claire, WI 54701
715-836-3671

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INTRODUCTION

Appraisals of our nation's schools include severe criticism of teacher preparation programs. Essentially this criticism is leveled at Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education (SCDs). Legislative initiatives, alternative certification programs, post-baccalaureate teacher preparation programs, and the establishment of a national standards board are common responses to these criticisms. This paper indicates the need for a different kind of response, one that the institutions traditionally responsible for preparing our nation's teachers can provide.

The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (UW-EC) is one such institution. In addition to graduate programs, it serves approximately 10,000 undergraduate students through the Schools of Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, and Nursing. School of Arts & Sciences faculty serve all programs, because of the liberal arts orientation of the institution and the recognized significance of general education.

Preparation

A study of the current elementary and secondary teacher preparation programs at UW-EC indicates that Arts and Sciences faculty predominate the preparation of prospective teachers on the basis of program credits. The minimum 134 semester credit elementary education program generally includes 82 credits of work in Arts and Sciences courses, 61% of the required credits. The minimum 145 semester credits in the secondary education program typically includes 108 credits of work in Arts and Sciences courses, 74% of the required credits. In the first instance, School of Arts and Sciences faculty provide approximately 3 credits of instruction for every 2 credits provided by School of Education faculty; the ratio is approximately 3 to 1 in the secondary education program. Shulman noted:

One of the things that comes out very clearly in the intellectual biographies of our students is the enormous influence content course teachers have on students' conception of teaching. Whether they like it or not, university and college teachers in the disciplines are teacher educators (underlining added). They are educating future teachers every time they represent their subject in a particular way, every time they either do or do not make the evaluations they conduct compatible with the goals of the instruction in which they engage, every time they present their pedagogy in a particular way. (1)

Problems

This reality carries with it at least three significant problems that teacher preparation institutions should address. First, the problem of IDENTITY. Although most faculty members are teacher educators, they do not want to be so considered. How can role ownership be developed? Second, the problem of PREPAREDNESS. Typically the faculty members are scholars in a discipline. Those with the doctorate are researchers by preparation - not teachers. The teaching and research functions differ, so also should the programs preparing people to carry out those functions. How can

institutions help scholars become maximally effective teachers? Third, the problem of MODELING. Faculty will teach as they have been taught; they have to draw on their experience, when teaching. Their preparation as researchers has been provided by researchers. Logic suggests that in turn they should be worthy models for the development of prospective researchers. But what of prospective teachers? How can prospective teachers become maximally effective when their preparation is predominated by faculty not prepared to be teachers? What can institutions do to ensure that prospective teachers have teaching models worthy of emulation in the academic disciplines?

Identity

Lanier and Little addressed the problem of identity:

....The oversight and governance responsibility for teacher education programs is shared broadly across the institutions of higher education, emanating from faculty in the various departments that make teaching contributions to these three areas. (Areas: formal course work in general-liberal studies, formal course work in each student's major and minor fields of study, and formal course work in pedagogical study) Thus most university faculty who teach undergraduate students can be considered teachers of teachers—not just those who teach specific education courses.

....Borrowman (1965a) summarized accurately the situation for faculty in institutions preparing 90% of the teachers in America: "in these institutions, the majority of faculty members have an interest in teacher education that is at best tangential to their most active concerns. (2) (underlining added)

Institutions preparing teachers should help their faculties understand their relationship to prospective teachers. This would be easier to carry out than many of the mandated initiatives that have created a series of implementation problems, not the least of which is money. Resolving the identification problem would be a major step toward enhancing the effectiveness of prospective teachers.

Preparedness

Preparation that includes knowledge, skill, and affect is key to handling any responsibility. Research indicates that there are knowledge, skills and attitudes, in addition to inquiry skills and the knowledge of discipline content that are important to effective teaching. Peterson and Comeaux (1989) quote Shulman's (1987) perception of the seven domains of teachers' knowledge:

content knowledge or understanding of the subject matter

general pedagogical knowledge, with special reference to those broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization that appear to transcend subject matter

curriculum knowledge, with particular grasp of the materials and programs that serve as "tools of the trade" for teachers

pedagogical content knowledge, that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding

knowledge of learners and their characteristics

knowledge of educational contexts, ranging from the workings of the group or classroom, the governance and financing of school districts, to the character of communities and cultures

knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds (3)

If doctoral programs preparing aspiring university faculty do not provide the opportunity to develop the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes, for effective teaching, the hiring institutions should consider it an obligation to supplement the preparation through appropriate inservice activities.

The Mathematical Association of America adopted the following recommendation:

The undergraduate curriculum needs to be revised so that future teachers can study the subjects they will teach with instructors who model fine teaching and who understand the pedagogy of their material.....Instructors who teach any courses for prospective teachers must themselves be expert in the art and craft of teaching. (underlining added) (4)

Modeling

The problem of modeling is implicit in the statements quoted from Shulman, Lanier and Little, and the Mathematical Association of American, and in the preparedness problem. When university faculty members go to class prepared or unprepared, use effective or ineffective teaching strategies, are punctual or tardy, prepare appropriate or inappropriate examinations, treat students with respect or disrespect, give valuable or worthless assignments, return or don't return student work, motivate or stultify learning, enhance or cripple students' self-confidence and self-concept, they are modeling teaching behaviors imitable by prospective teachers. The same faculty members serve as identifying figures for prospective teachers. When a student accepts a faculty member(s) as one whom she would like to be like, she is establishing a predisposition to react to instructional situations in much the same manner as the identifying figure(s). Institutions must take seriously the responsibility of providing models worthy of imitation and identification, because faculty teaching will affect the performance of prospective teachers.

If universities help faculty understand and accept their role in preparing teachers, and supplement their preparation to carry out the instructional function, the concern for identity, preparedness and modeling should be diminished.

Program

The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire offers a "Targeted Instruction" program to all faculty, on a voluntary basis. The program addresses the problems of preparedness and modeling. Presently 17 faculty members from 11 departments and 1 special service area participate in the program taught by a faculty member from the School of Education. It has served faculty members and staff members from each of the following 34 areas:

Academic Computing	Elementary Education	Nursing
Allied Health	French	Physical Education
Art	Geography	Physics
Biology	Geology	Political Science
Business Admin	History	Psychology
Business Education	Library Science	Religion
Chemistry	Library Services	School Eval.Consortium
Comm.Disorders	Management Info.Systems	Social Work
Comm/Theatre Arts	Mathematics	Spanish
Computer Science	Media Development	Special Education
Economics	Music	Speech

The university office responsible for faculty inservice activities carried out a participant follow-up study in the Fall of 1989. Fifty-five participants were asked to respond to four questions that related closely to the essential components of the program. Comments were invited for each question. Forty (73%) participants returned usable responses. The questions and responses follow:

Did participation in the workshop help you better:

	yes		no		omit	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
a. plan instruction	37	93	3	07	-	-
b. carry out instruction	36	90	2	05	2	05
c. evaluate learner achievement	38	95	2	05	-	-
d. evaluate your instruction	38	95	2	05	-	-

Though comments varied, participants do regard defining instructional objectives as helpful to planning. Some indicated the value of establishing outcomes for focusing their instruction. The relationship of testing to objectives was clear. There was indication that the systematic approach to instruction provides a usable framework for instructional self-assessment. Some enjoyed the opportunity to discuss instructing with members of other departments. One person noted that the workshop was the most effective thing done in her/his teaching career to improve teaching skills and effectiveness, and that there has been a significant improvement in student evaluations as a result of the program. Several faculty recommended the program to peers, others indicated that they felt it should be mandatory for faculty. Apart from the evaluation activity, one participant suggested to a school Dean that participation in the program be a condition for extra-merit salary increases.

"Targeted Instruction" approaches instruction as a direct, systematic process. Though the artistry of teaching is recognized and appreciated, direct instruction emphasizes the science rather than the art of instructing. The program has three areas of emphasis: formulating instructional targets, employing appropriate evaluation procedures and helping ensure learner success. It stresses the importance of learner development and minimizes the emphasis on teacher activities. It promotes maximum learner development as opposed to sorting out learners, when addressing the question of the university's basic function.

The program initially focuses on the importance of instructional objectives specified in terms of learner development. These outcomes provide direction to the teacher in making subject matter, instruction and evaluation decisions, and to the learner in making study decisions. Developing learners' thinking skills is encouraged by relating objectives to the levels of the cognitive taxonomy and to classroom questioning strategies.

The second part of the program links evaluation procedures with the objectives. It examines the common characteristics of educational evaluation, and the essential qualities associated with evaluation instruments and procedures, and test interpretation. It considers means to help ensure quality assessment procedures emphasizing blueprinting when preparing written examinations. Principles of test construction and grading problems are explored.

Consistent with the philosophy that universities should foster the maximum development of students, participants consider means to ensure learner success. These include orienting learners to courses, establishing an environment conducive to learning, systematic instructional planning, applying basic learning principles, and employing instructional self-assessment to enhance teaching effectiveness.

Summary

Prospective teachers will teach as they have been taught. Institutions responsible for preparing our nation's teachers should improve the teaching of faculty. Addressing the problems of identity, preparedness and modeling will provide an appropriate, constructive institutional response to the criticism of teacher preparation programs.

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ABSTRACT

The paper proposes an institutional response to teacher preparation program criticism. Most criticism has been leveled at schools, departments and colleges of education. However, a case study at one university indicated that faculty in the School of Arts and Sciences deliver 61% of the credits in a typical elementary education program, and 74% of the credits in the secondary program. Because most of these people have been prepared as researchers, not teachers, the problems of identity, preparedness, and modeling are explored. An institutional response to the criticism of teacher preparation programs should deal with these problems. One university's program is described that has served faculty from 34 academic disciplines and service areas, and has been evaluated highly by participants.